



(Photo by Lt. Col. Scott Bleichwehl, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs)

Tides of Change Rolling In

Maj. Gen. J.D. Thurman (left), commanding general of Multi-National Division - Baghdad and the 4th Infantry Division, discusses current operations in the Iraqi capital in the division's headquarters Nov. 9 with his replacement, Maj. Gen. Joseph Fil, Jr., commanding general of the 1st Cavalry Division. First Team troops, based out of Fort Hood, Texas, will be officially taking over Nov. 15.

Essential Equipment, Vehicles Arrive in Kuwait

By Cpl. Robert Yde
2nd BCT Public Affairs

SEA PORT OF DEBARKATION, Kuwait - "Pay attention; follow your instructions; do what you need to do to get it done."

This simple advice stated by Pfc. Joshua Holyfield was the basic premise for the complex and crucial task of preparing vehicles and equipment of the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division for

movement from Kuwait to Iraq.

The Black Jack Brigade's equipment began arriving to Port Ash Shuaiba Oct. 23 after a month-long journey from Beaumont, Texas.

Once the ships arrive at the sea port of debarkation, Soldiers must then offload the vehicles and equipment and prepare them for movement to their final destination in Iraq.

Along with 46 other Soldiers selected from throughout the brigade, Holyfield, an

intelligence analyst with Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment is assisting in the operation, which is conducted 24 hours-a-day and is expected to take up to two weeks.

"We're moving the vehicles from the dock that need to go to each specific FOB (forward operating base), and then placing them in the specific order or line that they

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Prepping Essential for Journey North

By Sgt. Nicole Kojetin
1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs

CAMP BUEHRING, Kuwait -- The harsh wind pelted the Soldiers with sand, so they squinted their eyes and listened harder. The sun blazed so the troops wiped the sweat off their brows but kept listening.

The elements were much different then back home on Fort Hood, Texas, but the Soldiers of the Division Special Troops Battalion, 1st Cavalry Division, trudged on knowing that the class on entry control points on Oct. 17 could help them protect the person standing next to them.

The training focused the Soldiers on the different aspects of vehicle check points at base entrances and how to react to suspicious activities breaking each aspect down so the Soldiers knew exactly what to look for. Instructors walked the Soldiers through each segment of the entry control point and guided Soldiers through searching vehicles and the people coming through the entrance. With the classroom



(Photo by Sgt. Nicole Kojetin, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs)

Soldiers from the 1st Cavalry Division's Special Troops Battalion aim at a simulated vehicle heading their way at entry control point training Oct. 17.

portion complete, the troopers were able to try it themselves, first with an instructor giving them step-by-step instructions and then on a simulation range with live rounds. One troop said that it did not matter if you were a veteran or a brand-new Soldier the training was still important.

"I have done all this stuff before," said Sgt. Danny Jones, a Headquarters Support Company Soldier from Atlanta, Ga. "It doesn't matter though. This is what we cooks call the 'bread and butter' of training. It is crucial to keeping our forward operat-

ing base safe."

This is Jones' second tour to Iraq, and though his military occupation specialty makes him a cook by trade he knows that doesn't mean he will stay in the kitchen. His last tour was filled with patrols and guard duty.

"It is a dirty job but it needs to be done, and there needs to be people that know what they are doing," he said.

In fact, the majority of the First Team troops attending were not infantry or scouts.

"It doesn't matter what your job is. If they need you, they need you. One time I was just pointed at randomly to go," the nine-year veteran said. "

The battalion's commander agreed.

"The training is going great. The training ranges are so close to the environment in Iraq," said Lt. Col. Daniel Garcia. "We just can't get this kind of realistic training back home. I think it is an excellent opportunity for our Soldiers to come together as a team."

Arabic Phrase of the Day

shoonak?

**Defined: How
are you?**

Iraq 3-Day Forecast



Today

High: 77
Low: 49



Tomorrow

High: 70
Low: 49



Friday

High: 70
Low: 47

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Cavalry Brigade's Horses Arrive in Kuwait

Vehicle

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need to go to, to get where they need to go," the Sacramento, Calif. native explained.

The process of getting all the equipment from the port to where it needs to go is complicated and has involved months of planning.

"We've been planning for well over half-a-year to try to get the super-cargo and where the equipments going, where we're going and constantly updating with the 4th Infantry Division who we're replacing so we can make sure that the equipment gets to the right place at the right time," said Maj. Michael Duck, the brigade's aviation officer.

Duck, a native of Fort Lauderdale, Fla. who is serving as the port security officer, said that the biggest challenge is due to the fact that so much equipment is going to a number of different locations.

"We actually have to go to six different areas with all of our equipment so our goal is to get all of the pieces at the right place," Duck explained. "There's a lot of rolling stock and a lot of containers that makes it very difficult to do that, but with the people on the ground right now I'm pretty confident we'll get them where they need to go."

Those people on the ground are comprised of a variety of Soldiers, who were selected for the task based upon their vehicle qualifications and then broken down into day- and night-shifts.

"They have many different backgrounds as far as their MOS's (military occupational



(Photo by Cpl. Robert Yde, 2nd BCT Public Affairs)

A 1st Cavalry Division truck slowly makes it's way down the ramp of a Navy ship after arriving to the sea port of debarkation in Kuwait Oct. 25.

specialties) ranging from truck drivers to mechanics to even cooks," said Staff Sgt. Aaron Pryor, a wheeled vehicle mechanic with Co. E, Forward Support Company, 1st Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment and day-shift non-commissioned officer-in-charge.

Even the fact that the detail is a little shorthanded has not slowed down the operation.

"It's a detail that requires about 60 to 70 personnel, but we're doing an extremely superb job with 47," said 2nd Lt. Michael Meyers. after the first day.

"They've already down-loaded one ship, and I expect them to do a superb job in the future with the limited

resources that we have," he added.

With so many moving parts, Meyers, a platoon leader with Co. E, FSC, 1-5 Cav. said safety is a key concern.

"We put the NCOs with some of the Soldiers that have licenses but aren't as experienced," the Baltimore native explained, "When it comes to safety, I've trusted the NCOs to maintain and be that watchful eye."

Like Duck, Meyers said that the most difficult part of the task is lining up the equipment for its eventual convoy north, but taking this step now makes it much easier when its time to move.

"We build the convoys so that the convoy commander,

when he comes in, has an easier time locating the equipment," Meyers explained.

"It's already there for him - all it has to do is get put on HETs (heavy equipment transporter) and low-boys to get sent up north."

Already ahead of schedule these Soldiers will continue to work day and night over the course of the next week to ensure that, when the time comes, the Black Jack Brigade's equipment and vehicles are ready to be moved.

"It's going well right now," Duck said.

"The download went faster than we expected, we're going to get the equipment a little quicker than we thought we were," he said.



(Photo by Pfc. Jeffrey Ledesma, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs)

Division Special Troops Battalion, 1st Cavalry Division Soldiers scan their sectors for potential dangers such as improvised explosive devices, rocket propelled grenades and vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices during a convoy training exercise at the Urdairi Range in Kuwait Oct. 21.

From Horses to Humvees:

Troopers Learn to 'Ride' into Combat

**By Pfc. Jeffrey Ledesma
1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs**

URDAIRI, Kuwait - Although the Soldiers rolled in on air-conditioned tour buses through the Kuwaiti sands to the training site, they knew their comfort was coming to an end as soon as the buses stopped.

Troopers from 1st Cavalry Division drove through challenging situations during convoy exercises at the Urdairi Range Oct. 19 thru Oct 21. The First Team's Soldiers went through a series of classroom instruction, followed by hands-on close-quarter marksmanship training. Then they jumped into the seats of military vehicles during the last portion of the three-day training sequence - combat convoy training.

If the road wasn't bumpy enough, certain scenarios were scattered throughout the convoy lanes helped shake things up even more. In one situation, the convoy came upon an improvised explosive device. As other Soldiers dismounted to perform security checks and scan their areas, a signal support systems specialist, Pfc. Luis Covarrubias with Company A, Division Special Troops Battalion, stayed behind the wheel of his humvee. Even in a training environment, he found it a little

nerve-racking waiting for an explosive ordnance disposal team to arrive.

"Just sitting there when you're just parked was the most challenging part," said the Pacoima, Calif. native. "I couldn't just be sitting there in the unknown."

For others the challenge was in the harsh, desert conditions.

"The hardest part was when it started to get dark," said Pfc. Raymond Uzzolino, also with Company A, DSTB. "The sand was kicking up behind the wheels of the vehicle in front of you."

During the dry-run convoy lane the following day, in a blink of a flare, the designated aid and litter vehicle was hit by an IED. Soldiers in the convoy had to instantaneously adapt and overcome by having another vehicle come and recover the casualties.

Covarrubias was the driver for that aid and litter vehicle.

He said that in the other scenarios his team recovered people and that was worth the danger of being in the kill zone.

"If a person was hurt, it was my job to go and get them," he said. "We were saving lives as the aid and litter vehicle and being a part of that was rewarding."

Difficult situations are a part of Army life, especially in a war zone.

Soldiers will react to those situations

differently.

"(The training) helped because of the fact it gave you a little more 'OK, you know what you have to do now and what you're suppose to do.' I guess it gives you a little more comfort of 'Now you actually have the training of what you're suppose to do,' rather than driving around wondering what you're suppose to be doing," said the Jersey City, N.J. native.

"The training we went through exists to prepare us for the real deal," said Covarrubias. "People are actually going to be locked and loaded (and) you know what to do now when you're loaded with a .50 cal or a 249."

The whole convoy training experience prepared the troops for the unexpected, he added.

"There was a lot of classroom, a lot of training, a lot of planning, then a lot of actually doing it," said Uzzolino, nicknamed "Uzi" by his fellow troopers.

"The training did help," Covarrubias said. "(My family) would feel better because I am more prepared, because they now I won't do something dumb."

With the training complete, suddenly a herd of camels crossed in the distance. Covarrubias and Uzzolino were definitely no longer in central Texas. These two Soldiers were far from home getting ready for war.